

## **Is This Abuse By the Children's Authority of TT and the Child Protection Unit of TTPS?**

This question is being asked by me, Donald D. Berment, as a Domestic Violence Counsellor, from the Organisation Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVAW), in the context of a recent incident, (described below), which occurred on Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> July about 10.30am, at the home of a Single Father on Teak Drive, off Cicada Extension, River Estate, Diego Martin. THE FACTS ARE AS FOLLOWS:-

This father and his family is one of my Longitudinal Case Studies, in the Electoral District of Bagatelle/Blue Basin, in the Constituency of Diego martin North East, over the period of my research in the Housing and Settlement Development Sector, most research housed at <https://www.archive.org/details/@mavawsec>.

On said Saturday, the father of the only male child in the family, who will be 11 years on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2021, was visited at his home by the mother of their son, with 2 Plain Clothes Police Officers from the Child Protection Unit, situate at the Maraval Police Station; one male and one female Officer in plain clothes in an unmarked Police vehicle and unaccompanied by a Uniformed Police Officers, as is required by the regulation for such visits.

The Officers produced their Police Badges, gave their names, said they were from the Maraval Police Station and are investigating a Report of abuse to the male child, who was said to have visible Black and Blue eyes. The father immediately called his son and showed the Officers that no such abuse had been done and no signs of Black and Blue eyes were visible.

The male Officer then said that we can do this the hard way or the easy way, a veiled threat of forceful Police action and continued by saying that they will have to take the child for a Medical Examination and obtain a Statement from him and bring him back in 2 to 3 hours.

The female Officer gave the father the number at the Police Station for the Child Protection Unit and the Hot Line Number of the Children's Authority, and the father released the lawful custody of his son to the Police Officers, for them to carry out further investigations.

After a few hours the said Saturday, the father called the mother and asked to speak to his son, who told him that the Police Officers dropped them off at the St. Lucien Road Junction with the Diego Martin Main Road and handed him over to his mother. No Medical Examination was done, and no Statement was taken, up to the present time and his daily requests to talk to his son, after that first day, has been and is being denied him, the mother cutting off the calls as soon as she recognises his number. A behaviour not sanctioned by the Children's Authority Act at Section 6.

**The father visited me on Sunday, the 1<sup>st</sup> day of August, expressing his pain and suffering, worry and concern, by the action taken by the police and I gave him some instructions on the way forward.**

1. Write a Statement of the Facts which occurred during the Police visit.
2. Bring it for me to copy and address it in an envelope to the places you will carry it.
3. Immediately carry one to the Officer in Charge of the West End Police Station. (my call card was enclosed in all 3 Envelopes to encourage peaceful discussions).
4. On Tuesday the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of August (the 1<sup>st</sup> day was the Emancipation Holiday), carry one to the Children's Authority Building addressed to the Executive Director. (now moved to Dere Street)

5. On Tuesday, also carry one the Police Complaints Authority, addressed to the Officer In Charge. The Officer on duty told him they only deal with matters involving misbehaviour of the Police.

The father complied, said the Officer In Charge of West End Police station was not in and another Officer received the letter to hand him when he comes to work. Said he gave the Officer on Duty at the Children's Authority, who will hand it over when they come to work. As per the Police Complaint's Authority, I asked him to post it.

**In my humble view, a simple task was performed, of removing lawful custody from a father and granting custody to the mother, under threat of force by the Police, who assumed the power of the Court, which is the lawful authority to grant custody and without the Court's consent and supervision.**

A Single Father for the sum total of 32 days, up to today the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of September 2021, been living without a clue of how his son is surviving. Can you imagine the pain and suffering this single father is experiencing, after having custody, taking care and protecting his son for close to 11 years to date. He already bought his books to attend his Standard 4 Class he will be going to when Virtual School starts on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Has his school uniforms prepared to start Classes. Cannot start helping his son get familiar with his Standard 4 School Books. Further, from information of his 2 grandchildren, who were staying by their grandmother for some months have testified that were abused and not given regular meals and he is not being able to protect his son, if he is experiencing the same abuse his other 2 grandchildren experienced.

All of my Training to date stress the value of Patience and an Approach to Peaceful Negotiations in matters of Conflict, especially Family Matters. So, on Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> day of August I called Children's Authority Hotline at 10am and spoke to Mrs. Garraway, explaining my concern. On said Tuesday at 4.15pm, Mrs. Grant of Children's Authority called me to discuss the matter. She said the Police just "handed over" the child and gave them the matter on Monday the 1<sup>st</sup> day of August, but the Case Worker was on sick leave and just came out today and she will let her call the father to visit the home and report to the Authority.

My Case Notes reveal that the mother left the family home on Teak Drive 3 years and 9 months ago and carried one daughter and her daughter's 2 children with her. Allegations of abuse by both parties were recorded. Contact with the son she left behind has not been regular.

The Children's Act Chapter 46:01 and the Children's Authority Act Chapter 46:10 are very clear on how the removal of children is to followed on allegations of abuse to them and/or they being in imminent danger. The "Handing Over Police Action" as described by Mrs. Grant is not listed in any of those 2 Acts directing the management of Children.

Having not been able to achieve Peaceful Discussion on this matter to date, seeing daily the level of frustration experienced by this Single Father and earnestly trying to avoid unwelcome behaviour to others and to himself, fully aware of the Challenge of Access To Justice at this present time, my last attempt to bring peace to this family is to employ the Strategy of "Democratic Citizenship" as taught by Professor Michael Olatokun in the London's University Course "Citizenship and The Rule Of Law". In other words, share the FACTS and Law relevant to this matter. You can answer the Question if that Behaviour is Abuse.

Signed:.....[Donald D. Berment](#), [Lifelong Student/Education](#) (LLSTU) Goal (LLEDU).